

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 9 and 17 are amended. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Office Action finds the Declaration to be defective. Based on the June 8 telephone interview with Examiner Cabrera, Applicants attach an application data sheet that includes the address of the fourth inventor. Accordingly, Applicants assert that the inventor information is now complete.

The Office Action objects to claims 18 and 19 because it appears that claim 18 is missing on page 12, line 1. The first line (i.e., the preamble) of claim 18 is recited at the bottom of page 11, line 34 of the Applicants' specification. Thus, there are no informalities in claims 18-19. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the claims be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 4-9, 12-17 and 20-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Inui (U.S. Patent No. 5,204,821); and claims 2-3, 10-11, and 18-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Inui in view of Nam (U.S. Patent No. 6,141,598). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

In particular, Applicants assert that Inui does not disclose or suggest a parts procurement system that includes at least virtual production line preparation means for preparing a virtual production line based on long term production data that is more than one month, as recited in independent claims 1, 9, and 17.

Instead, Inui teaches a part supply instruction apparatus that includes a production schedule system, a parts information system, a car information system and an order issue managing system which are preferably located at an assembly factory, and wherein instructions relating to the type of part, the number of parts, a supply date, etc., is preliminarily made on the basis of a monthly car production schedule (Abstract; Column 1,

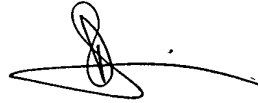
lines 17-22). By teaching that instructions relating the supply of parts is made on the basis of a monthly car production schedule, Inui fails to disclose or suggest virtual production line preparation means that are based on long term production data that is more than one month. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 9 and 17, and their dependent claims, are patentable over Inui. As such, Applicants respectfully request that rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

The Office Action admits that Inui fails to disclose the limitations of claim 18 (Office Action, page 4, lines 10 and 11). Moreover, Nam teaches a vehicle assembly line control system and method in which a production plan for a final assembly process is established first and a production plan for a paint process is set up based on the production plan (Abstract). Nam fails to cure deficiencies in Inui in disclosing or rendering obvious the features of dependent claims 18 and 19, including the limitations of independent claim 17. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-24 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment: Application Data Sheet
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: July 9, 2004

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